



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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Commission to Hear from Students and Researchers on Escalating College Costs

SACRAMENTO — November 30, 2007 — The California Postsecondary Education Commission will discuss the continuously rising cost of higher education at its December 4–5, 2007, meeting in Sacramento. The Commission will hear from two University of California student scholars who will present their views on college affordability and results from a survey they conducted regarding student sentiment towards the cost of a college education.

The Commission will also discuss findings from an analysis it conducted on data collected for the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. Commission researchers found that student fees increased for public institutions, and that the “unmet need” — the amount needed to pay after aid, borrowing, and reasonable family contributions — increased substantially from 1996 to 2004.

“There is no doubt that college is becoming increasingly unaffordable for both middle- and lower-income students, in spite of increases in student aid,” said Murray J. Haberman, the Commission’s Executive Director. “It is clear from the data that students are borrowing more, working more hours, and are deferring timely graduation because of rising college expenses.”

Most interesting in the Commission’s analysis is that the state’s community college students, who fees are very low, paid 31% more in 2004 than they did in 1996 after adjusting for inflation, and taking into consideration the total cost of attending college, including room and board, books, transportation and campus-based fees. Students at four-year public institutions paid 9% to 10% more after adjusting for inflation.

Increased financial aid has assisted low-income students in reducing the remaining cost of college after aid and loans. However, the data show that even these families are borrowing more to pay for college. For example, in 1996 the average loan amount was \$1,870 for a low-income student in the CSU. In 2004, the average loan amount was \$2,696.

For families of all income levels, loan amounts have increased by 91% for community college students and by 37% for CSU students.

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“The State of California once distinguished itself on offering an affordable and accessible higher education to all its residents who could benefit from instruction,” said Olivia Singh, the Commission’s Chair. “Today, the rapidly growing cost of a college education is forcing many families to make hard decisions about whether they can afford to send their children to college.”

The Commission’s most recent report on college affordability can be found at:

http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Agendas/Agenda0712/Item_10.pdf.

The agenda and concomitant reports for the December 4-5, 2007, meeting can be viewed at:

<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Agendas/agnd0712.asp>.

The Commission audio-streams its meetings via the Internet: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov>.

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission’s primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.